

ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

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Scholars Discuss Hindu and Christian "Views of Man"

(Nagpur) - In the first meeting of its kind ever held in India seven Hindu scholars and twelve Christian scholars met recently in Nagpur for five days to discuss together their respective "views of man".

The meeting was held under the joint auspices of the World Council of Churches and the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, Bangalore. It was the first of three similar meetings in Asia being sponsored by the World Council of Churches in co-operation with the International Missionary Council and the East Asia Christian Conference.

Dr. Paul D. Devanandan, Institute director, in an opening speech described the purpose of the meeting as clarification of the basic concepts of the two religions, the search for issues which could form the basis for further discussions and the establishment of personal relations between participants.

He declared: "Indian Christianity has come of age. It is rooted in the soil of India. This meeting expresses the desire of Indian Christians to become re-acquainted with their relatives and to realize the values of a common heritage".

Papers were presented on the Hindu and Christian views of "man in society", "man as an ethical individual", "the origin and destiny of man", and the "concept of personality". Evening sessions dealt with the respective concepts of the two religions of creation and the meaning of history, the foundation and role of ethical life, the nature of divine grace, the basis of human solidarity and the religious and secular bases of social life.

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At the conclusion of the meeting the participants voted not to present "findings", but to continue discussions at annual meetings. Slated as topic for next year's session was "popular Hinduism". Chairman of the meeting was Principal J. R. Chandran of the United Theological Colleges, Bangalore. Similar consultations will be held later this year in Burma on "Christianity and Theravada Buddhism" and in Hong Kong on "The Gospel and Chinese Religions". A similar discussion under WCC auspices was held in July in Jerusalem.

EPS, Geneva.

Cardinal Bea Warns Against "Illusions" in Seeking Unity

(Ferrara) - Augustin Cardinal Bea, head of the Vatican secretariat on Christian unity, has warned against "too many illusions" in seeking Christian unity, because it is "a task which will require much time, charity and patience".

"But all the same," the Cardinal told a meeting in Ferrara, Italy, "we must have the confidence which is based on prayer and on the fact that a constantly growing number of Christians of all confessions are joining in the High Priestly prayer of Jesus 'ut omnes unum sint' and are reminding themselves of Jesus' words, 'What is impossible to men is possible to God.'"

The Cardinal said that the Roman Catholic position in the quest for unity must be characterized by two attitudes. First, the church must protect the Faith and give "the greatest care in safeguarding the complete integrity of Catholic dogma". Secondly, it must have "a readiness to understand and (show) genuine active charity towards the separated brethren".

He said the first of these attitudes is not a restriction of charity, "but rather the necessary guarantee that charity should remain authentic, i.e., absolutely loyal to Christ and to His Bride, the Church, by full acceptance of the Truth which Christ makes evident through the Church".

The secretariat was set up last spring to deal with relations with non-Roman Catholic Christians in preparation for the Second Vatican (Ecumenical) Council. Cardinal Bea, 79, a German-born member of the Jesuit order, was formerly rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome and private confessor to the late Pope Pius XII.

EPS, Geneva.

Castro Youth Protest Against Pastoral Letter Attacking Communism

(Santiago)-Groups of youthful Castro followers marched into the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Santiago de Cuba, during Sunday morning services in an attempt to prevent the reading of the pastoral letter issued by Archbishop Enrique Perez Corantes. The letter was sharply critical of Communism.

Reports from Santiago said that the youth operating in groups of about sixty shouted revolutionary slogans in the Cathedral and sang the marching song of Fidel Castro's 26th of July Movement during each mass. The demonstrations lasted from fifteen minutes to half an hour.

Priests waited until the groups ended their singing and shouting before continuing the mass and reading the pastoral letter.

EPS, Geneva.

Puerto Ricans Re-Elect Governor Despite Catholic Opposition

(San Juan) - Governor Luis Munoz Marin has won an overwhelming victory at the polls in his bid for re-election as governor of Puerto Rico.

The 62-year old incumbent swept all but one of the island's 82 precincts and won a record-smashing 456,317 votes against 250,638 for his nearest rival. Third with less than ten per cent of the votes was the new Christian Action Party which had been formed to oppose the governor.

The landslide victory came when thousands of persons in the predominantly Roman Catholic commonwealth defied orders of their bishops not to vote for the governor because the philosophy of his Popular Democratic Party was "anti-Christian and anti-Catholic". (See EPS No.40)

The bishops based their criticisms on the government's opposition to allowing public school children time off to attend religious instruction classes; a law permitting the teaching of birth control and allowing sterilization; and tolerance of common-law marriages. One of the signers, Archbishop James P. Davis, of San Juan, had told his flock that willful violation of the letter would be "a sin of disobedience".
EPS, Geneva.

WCC Aids Aged White Russian Refugees

(Geneva) - A group of 82 aged White Russian Orthodox refugees, many of them ill or physically handicapped, arrived in Geneva last week from Hong Kong under World Council of Churches' auspices. They will go to various homes in Switzerland and other countries of western Europe where they will be cared for by the churches for the rest of their lives.

Transportation for the group was made possible by a gift to the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees by the national Danish Refugee Committee.

About 20 of the group will remain in Switzerland, in homes operated by HEKS, the relief agency of the Swiss Protestant Churches. Others will go to church-supported homes in France, Belgium, Great Britain and the Netherlands.

During the past four years the World Council has helped bring close to 500 aged White Russian refugees from Hong Kong to homes in Europe. EPS, Geneva.

Thomaner Choir Director Moves to Western Germany

(Hamburg) - Professor Kurt Thomas, conductor of the world-famous boys Thomaner Choir, has returned permanently to West Germany from Leipzig, East Germany.

The choir director told reporters in West Germany that he decided to leave because of "the constant difficulties" encountered in his work. He said the immediate cause was a decision by East German authorities not to allow the choir to make a long-planned concert tour of fifteen cities in West Germany. He also mentioned that he had been refused permission in 1957 to take the choir to the United States for the Lutheran World Federation Assembly. Further, he said, the authorities had made repeated demands that he abolish religious services held at the boarding school for the choir boys. He said that if the choir loses its "church-character" it will be "finished".

Professor Thomas' home was originally in West Germany. His family remained there when he moved to Leipzig in 1957 when he accepted the post as choir director.
EPS, Geneva.

"...Obedience to Faith" Asked of East German Christians

(Berlin) - The Synod of the Evangelical Church of the Union (EKU), whose member churches include the majority of Protestants in East Germany, has authorized a pastoral letter calling upon clergy and parishoners to consider "obedience to the faith" before deciding to flee East Germany.

The pastoral letter, which will be read from the pulpits of all its East German member churches, will urge also that they take into account the importance of "... remaining united in one church".

The issuing of the letter was approved at a recent meeting of the Synod in Berlin - Weissensee following reports of a continued flow of refugees from the East across the West German borders.

Dr. Joachim Beckmann, ECU Council president, said the Synod had repeatedly stressed that "Protestants are not absolutely free to leave the place where God has placed them". In the present situation, he said, the church must give Christian guidance in helping persons come to a decision about leaving their homes.

At the same time, he said, the East German government must be urged to create the conditions in which the "fear, anxiety and pressure upon conscience" which result in the flights would be alleviated and Christians would be allowed freedom to practice their faith.

The church regulation which forbids pastors who have fled East Germany without permission of their church authorities was discussed at another meeting of West German church leaders last week.

Bishop Wilhelm Halfmann, president of the Church of Kiel, told the Synod of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Schleswig-Holstein that the regulation has caused "great difficulty".

While pastors who flee are legally recognized as political refugees, he said, the West German church cannot give them employment until their case has been decided by East German authorities, a procedure which often takes several years.

"The Eastern churches must ensure that the dykes do not burst," he declared. "But on the other hand, the people who feel themselves menaced usually do not have time to inform their church authorities. At the same time, if a pastor who feels threatened confides his intention of fleeing, he legally implicates his confidant. There are cases in which the wife can no longer stand (the situation), and where the children of clergy in this land of workers and farmers, are refused permission to attend the secondary schools."

"We must remember," he declared, "the commandment to have pity on those who suffer, and bear in mind that no one had the right to force another into martyrdom."
EPS, Geneva.


Union Official Refuses BEC Request for Interview on Reeves' Deportation

(London) - The High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa has refused a request of the British Council of Churches that he receive its deputation to discuss the summary deportation in September of the Rt. Rev. Ambrose Reeves, Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg.

The Council announced in London that the request was refused in a letter from the Commissioner's secretary which said that the Commissioner views the deportation as "a matter which falls purely within the domestic jurisdiction of the Union Government, (and) does not believe that any advantage can be had from a discussion with your representatives".

The Council decided to ask for the interview at its recent meeting at which it adopted a resolution "noting with great regret" the deportation and its "consequent effect upon the people of (Bishop Reeves') diocese. Bishop Reeves, an opponent of the government's apartheid policy was deported on September 12.

EPS, Geneva.



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Korean amputees suffering from Hansen's disease - a leprosy condition - will be given special help by Korean Church World Service. The agency will equip those so stricken with the special artificial limbs required by their condition.

* *

Dr. Leslie Brown, former Anglican bishop of Uganda, has been elected the nation's first Archbishop of the new Uganda Province of the Anglican communion. Dr. Brown has recently served as Bishop of Namirembe when the Protectorate was reorganized into separate dioceses. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Geoffrey Fisher, is expected to visit Uganda in April to inaugurate the new province and install its archbishop. Dr. Brown is a former missionary-teacher in South India and is a former chaplain of Jesus College, Cambridge.

* *

The International Congregational Council will begin publication in January of a new magazine World Congregationalism. An announcement said that the magazine will speak for the denomination, but "it will not be speaking merely denominationally, but pre-eminently out of a concern for the Gospel, for the whole world of men and for the good estate of the universal Church". Publication offices will be in London.

* *

A small group of Greek Orthodox in Uganda who volunteered their labour evenings and weekends have completed the first of two new Orthodox churches near Kampala, Uganda. The church will be used until a second, a much larger Byzantine style structure, which will be the main Orthodox church in Uganda, is completed. Donations towards the larger church are coming from Greece as well as Orthodox in other sections of Africa.

* *

Membership in Central America of the Assemblies of God (USA), one of the Pentecostal, evangelical, missionary denominations, is reported to have tripled in the past seven years. Present figures are 225 churches, 11,000 adherents and 26,000 Sunday-school pupils. Mission stations also have jumped from 193 to 631.

* *

A new kind of Roman Catholic worker-priest movement is reported growing up in Rome, but unlike the one in France which was dissolved, this one had Vatican blessing. Every Thursday hundreds of young men in training for the priesthood trade their clerical garb for workers' clothes and spend the day in manual labour in the city. The experiment, still in its early stages, is intended to help future priests better to understand their responsibilities to the working class.

* *

A total of 133 students are enrolled in the academies of the Hungarian Reformed Church at Debrecon and Budapest.

* *

Dr. Josef Nordenhaug, former president of the Baptist Theological Seminary, in Ruschlikom, near Zurich, Switzerland, is the new secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, Washington, D. C.. Dr. Nordenhaug is a member of the Southern Baptist Convention, (USA).

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Theme of the 10th German Evangelical Kirchentag will be "I Am With You". The Kirchentag will be held in Berlin, July 19 - 23, 1961.

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INFORMATION CONCERNING ARRANGEMENTS FOR
PRESS, RADIO AND TELEVISION
THIRD ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

New Delhi, India
November 18 - December 6, 1961

REGISTRATION AND ACCREDITATION

Limited accommodation at Assembly sessions restrict the number of accreditations which can be issued in all categories and early application is urged.

Accreditation will be given to persons in the following categories:

Press

- a) reporters from major wire services and newspapers
- b) full-time professional reporters from church press.

Radio, Television and Newsreel

- a) representatives of major radio and TV networks
- b) full-time producers of religious radio and TV programmes
- c) newsreel producers

Photographers

- a) representatives of major wire services and newspapers
- b) representatives of church press.

If space permits a limited number of accreditations may also be issued for persons not listed in the above categories.

ALL applications must be accompanied by a letter of reference from an appropriate official of the agency to be represented, stating the applicant's position in that agency.

All applications will be acknowledged. Persons whose applications are received by January 1, 1961, will be notified by March 1. Persons accredited will be sent press credentials which must be presented at the Third Assembly in order to receive the press card required for admission to all Assembly sessions.

TRAVEL

Accredited press, radio-TV and film personnel and photographers are asked to make their own travel arrangements. A special travel plan at a slightly lower cost may be available for church-employed representatives. Further information will be sent later to those accredited in this category.

HOTELS

Accredited press, radio-TV and film personnel and photographers are asked to make their own hotel arrangements. Cost for hotel and three meals a day should be budgeted in the neighbourhood of U.S.\$10.00 (Sw.Fr.43.-; £3.11s.0d.) per day or more.

(more)

PRESS ROOM FACILITIES

Standard press room facilities will be available. PRESS REPRESENTATIVES ARE ASKED TO BRING THEIR OWN PORTABLE TYPEWRITERS.

A special section of seats will be set aside for the press in the main Assembly hall at all public meetings. Plenary meetings of the Assembly will be amplified in English, German and French in the press rooms.

PRESS SERVICE

Releases will be issued regularly by the Third Assembly office staff in English, French and German.

Regular press briefings will be held to provide background and interpretation for each day's meetings. A major preliminary briefing session will be held in New Delhi on Saturday, November 18, 1961.

Texts of all major speeches and Assembly documents will be available to press in English, French and German.

PRESS COVERAGE

All plenary sessions will be open to the press subject to the usual rights of the chairman and the meeting.

Section and Committee meetings will be closed to the full press. However, they may be attended by two or three press persons to be elected daily by the press corps to represent the entire group for purposes of background information.

FACILITIES FOR RADIO / TELEVISION AND FILMS

Recording rooms will be available. Further information about these and other facilities for radio and television coverage will be provided later.

PHOTO SERVICES

Photographs will be available to accredited press for a small fee. Assembly background pictures are available now from WCC Department of Information.

ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

Special editions of ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE will be issued in English, French and German during the Assembly.

IF FURTHER INFORMATION IS REQUIRED PLEASE WRITE TO:

World Council of Churches
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION
17 route de Malagnou
Geneva, Switzerland.

APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION FOR PRESS, RADIO-TV, FILM REPRESENTATIVES
TO THIRD ASSEMBLY, WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

New Delhi, India
Nov. 18 - December 5, 1961

TO
INFORMATION DEPARTMENT
World Council of Churches
17 route de Malagnou
Geneva, Switzerland

Name _____

Publication / Agency / Radio-TV Station / Other Affiliation _____

Position or Title _____

Full-Time _____ Part-Time _____

In which language do you wish to receive Assembly documents?

English _____ French _____ German _____

Expected date of arrival in New Delhi _____

Expected date of departure _____

Will you require the use of / telex or teletype machines _____ telephones _____
other equipment? _____

Will you be able to bring a portable typewriter? _____

Will you be accredited to the Assembly in any other capacity? Please indicate.

* * *

(For Church Press Only:

Church Affiliation of Publication Represented _____

Are you interested in the special travel plan, if it can be arranged ?
_____)

Date _____

Signature _____

Address: _____
